



Media Release

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Email: svdpsadmin@svdpsa.org.au

Website: www.vinnies.org.au

Donation Hotline: 13 18 12

Executives join forces to help the growing number of South Australians experiencing homelessness

This year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout is expected to be the largest yet, as leaders from all sectors join in solidarity to raise awareness and funds for the increasing number of people experiencing homelessness.

The Vinnies CEO Sleepout in Adelaide last year raised over \$715,000, which Vinnies hopes to exceed this year, with a stretch goal of million dollars.

The event will take place at a Wilson Car Park in the Adelaide CBD, a change from recent venues including last year's at Adeliade Oval and Government House in 2017.

David Wark, CEO, St Vincent de Paul Society SA, says the 2016 census results reveal a worrying trend.

"The latest census results indicate homelessness is increasing overall in Australia, and in most States – including South Australia. The figures are disturbing, with 50 people homeless to every 10,000; an increase from 48 per 10,000 in 2011." Mr. Wark said.

Vinnies believes policy changes around negative gearing and community housing, combined with a long-term strategy, are needed to reduce homelessness.

"Our on the ground services are essential to the members of our community who find themselves without the basic necessities of food and shelter," he said.

Homelessness can happen suddenly, with a relationship breakup, illness, unemployment or other crisis often the catalyst into a spiral of poverty.

"Many people are just a single step away from homelessness," Mr Wark said. "Vinnies understands this and our support is compassionate and non-judgmental."

In South Australia, this support includes two crisis accommodation centres, ten Fred's Van meal services and Vinnies unique home visitation service, which provides assistance to over 60,000 South Australians each year.

"Funds raised at the Vinnies CEO Sleepout will enable us to keep up with increasing demands for our meal services, for material assistance provided through our home visitation service and to support hundreds of people staying at our crisis accommodation centres," Mr Wark said.

Chief Executive of BankSA, Nick Reade, has participated in the past five Vinnies CEO Sleepouts and is consistently South Australia's highest fundraiser, and has also been the highest fundraiser nationally.

“I have again registered for this year’s event and strongly encourage others to take part.” Mr Reade said. “Business leaders are in a unique position to make an enormous difference to the most vulnerable people in the community, including the 6,000 men, women and children who are homeless in South Australia.”

“Our staff and customers across BankSA get behind the Vinnies CEO Sleepout to help vulnerable South Australians receive the help they need for a brighter future.”

Registration for the Vinnies CEO Sleepout is via the [ceosleepout.org.au](https://www.ceosleepout.org.au) website. Executives and business or community leaders can register individually or as a team.

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For interviews with David Wark, please contact Jo Dinnison, Communications Officer at Vinnies, on 0419 940 721 or jdinnison@svdpsa.org.au.

More information on the Vinnies CEO Sleepout can be found at <https://www.ceosleepout.org.au/>
